(b) if so, the details of their grievances; and

(c) what is the action plan of Government to address their apprehensions?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) to (c) Chief Ministers of State Government of Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh met Hon'ble Prime Minister on 19.12.2007 and submitted a memorandum on new Mineral Policy concerning grant of preference to value addition industries in grant of mineral concessions, continuing reservations for Public Sector Undertakings, grant of large area for prospecting for bulk minerals, levy of royalty on *ad-valorem* basis, encourage mining companies to use a portion of annual profits for socio-economic development, consultation with the State Governments for amendments in the Mines & Mineral (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957, change in procedure for grant of mineral concessions, export of iron ore and accruement of export duty on minerals to the States. The various issues raised in the Memorandum were discussed. The concerns of the Chief Ministers were heard and appropriately addressed in the New Mineral Policy.

Environmental hazards of mining

1774. DR. K. MALAISAMY:
SHRI S. ANBALAGAN:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) how many mining units were stopped from operation at the instance of Courts taking into account the environmental hazards around mining industry and the number of workers affected; and

(b) what are the safeguards ensured in this context to get over the environmental issues on the one side and to approach the court to modify its ordres on the other in the larger interest of mining industry and the workers?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) As per information available with the Indian Bureau of Mines, a subordinate office of the Ministry, mining operation for 444 mining units for major minerals have been stopped at the directions/orders of Courts on account of the environmental hazards around mining units, affecting 6745 workers.

(b) Mining activities are subject to compliance of various statutory approvals, including Mining Plan and Environment & Forest clearances and any violation of same invite action by regulatory agencies. The decisions of Government are open to judicial review.

Royalty and duties on iron-ore export

1775. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has been briefed by the Federation of Indian Mineral Industries (FIMI) that if the proposal to increase royalty and export duties on iron-ore is implemented, India would be the highest taxed country amongst major iron-ore producing regions and this would marginalize exports, resulting in the closure of many mines in the country;